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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7145
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TAGS: [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [CASC](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [HHS](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: Enterovirus 71 Outbreak - South China Infections and Death
Toll Increasing

REF: A) Beijing 1765, B) Guangzhou 250, C) Beijing 1726

1. (SBU) Summary: Hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) has taken a fourth life in Guangdong Province, and has infected more than 7,100 local children. Provincial health officials are working to determine the incidence rate of EV 71 among HFMD cases. Guangxi has reported two deaths among 636 cases of the disease. Hainan has also reported two deaths, while the number of infections there has reached 180. Fujian has not reported any deaths and the number of cases remains unchanged at 503. End summary.

Guangdong Infections Passes 7,000

2. (U) Guangdong Province reported a fourth infant death on May 8, and health officials are conducting an autopsy in one suspected HFMD death case. The new fatality occurred on May 5 after an 8-month old girl was admitted to Dashi Hospital in the Panyu District of Guangzhou. A feces screening test showed positive results for Enterovirus 71 (EV 71), and was subsequently confirmed by the HFMD expert team (ref B). A suspected case was reported in Dongguan, where a 19-month-old boy died on May 6, but the cause of death has not yet been confirmed. As of May 8, the number of HFMD cases in Guangdong had reached 7,103, including 34 confirmed cases caused by the EV 71 strain.

3. (SBU) According to He Jianfeng, Deputy Director General of the Epidemic Disease Prevention Institute of Guangdong CDC, the province is currently working to determine the percentage of cases linked to EV 71, but difficulties with replenishing testing reagents, lack of proper staff training, and a one-day delay for test results on suspected EV 71 samples have been challenging the government's efforts. Guangdong Department of Health designated three hospitals -- the Guangdong Women and Children's Hospital, Pearl River (Zhujiang) Hospital, and Guangzhou Children's Hospital -- to receive HFMD patients transferred from other hospitals without ICU facilities.

Guangxi Death Toll Reaches Two

14. (SBU) Guangxi authorities reported one new death on May 8, increasing the total number of fatalities to two. The second death occurred near Liuzhou city on May 6, after the child fell ill on May 13. The other victim came from Yulin, and Guangxi health officials have responded by sending taskforces to both areas where deaths occurred. The number of reported HFMD cases reached 636 on May 8. Health Department Spokesman Chen Faqin said the increase in cases from May 6 was due to better surveillance by health authorities since new reporting requirements were implemented on May 2, as well as a backlog of cases now being reported that were originally detected on or before May 2. Guangxi's CDC Director told media that EV 71 has been confirmed in 9 cases and described all HFMD cases so far as sporadic, rather than part of an outbreak.

Hainan Province Also Reports Two Deaths

15. (U) Hainan Province reported two deaths among a total of 180 cases, as of May 7. Five cases have been confirmed as EV 71, including the two deaths. Hainan health authorities activated a comprehensive daily reporting system that will inform medical personnel at each level of new cases.

Fujian Province - No Fatalities

16. (U) Fujian reported 503 cases of HFMD on May 4 with no new reports since then. Among the sick, 35 patients have been hospitalized, with no reports of fatalities.

17. (U) Beijing Embassy ESTH has cleared this cable.

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